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OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Letter dated 28 May 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the Framework for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation adopted by the Third Meeting of Senior Officials of the six participating countries of the subregion, namely the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, which was held at Ulaanbaatar in September 1996 (see annex).

The Framework for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation aims at promoting subregional cooperation to achieve environmentally sound and sustainable development in North-East Asia and as such constitutes a substantive input to the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21.

Since Mongolia was the host country of the above meeting, and in accordance with resolution 53/3 of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific of 30 April 1997, I kindly request that the text of the present letter and its annex be distributed as an official United Nations document of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Jargalsaikhany ENKHSAIKHAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Mongolia to the United Nations

* A/S-19/1 (to be issued).

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ANNEX

Framework for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation

1. The Senior Officials designated by the Governments of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, hereinafter referred to as the Participating Parties, having met at their Third Meeting, in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 17 to 20 September 1996, have agreed as follows:

1. General

1.1 The Participating Parties affirm their commitment to promote subregional cooperation to achieve environmentally sound and sustainable development in North-East Asia by actively and effectively promoting the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation, as a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development of 1992.

1.2 The Programme will be coordinated, to the extent possible, with other regional arrangements and activities of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to enhance the overall effectiveness of environmental cooperation in the subregion.

1.3 The Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, as adopted by the Conference, should continue to provide general policy guidance on subregional cooperation in North-East Asia.

2. Geographical coverage

2.1 The geographical scope of the Programme is defined as the areas under the jurisdiction of the following Participating Parties:

- China;
- Democratic People's Republic of Korea;
- Japan;
- Mongolia;
- Republic of Korea;
- Russian Federation.

2.2 Other Parties and relevant institutions that have an interest and commitment in furthering cooperation in North-East Asia may be invited to join in the Programme activities and provide financial support, as appropriate.

3. Programme objectives

3.1 The principal objective of the Programme is to promote subregional environmental cooperation and sustainable development efforts for enhancement of the quality of life and the well-being of present and future generations in accordance with the spirit of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

3.2 The activities under the Programme are intended to enhance the capacities of the Participating Parties in environmental management efforts through subregional cooperation. To facilitate the complete and effective participation of national institutions at all levels in sustainable development efforts, the activities of the Programme will be aimed primarily at strengthening their relevant technological and managerial capabilities.

3.3 It would be advantageous to have a step-by-step and practical approach towards this subregional cooperation and consolidate the results as the Programme develops in the future. That approach could be used as building blocks for strengthening subregional cooperation over time.

4. Senior Officials meeting on environmental cooperation in North-East Asia

4.1 The Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia will act as the Governing Body for the Programme. It will, accordingly, provide overall policy guidance as well as project coordination and management to the Programme.

4.2 The Meeting of Senior Officials will make all policy decisions concerning all substantive and financial matters related to the Programme and, in particular, will:

(a) Keep the Programme under constant review, with a view to identifying further areas of cooperation and project-related activities in a step-by-step approach;

(b) Review the progress in implementing the Programme and projects and evaluate the results achieved;

(c) Approve the budget and work plan of the Programme and projects;

(d) Attempt to formulate a common framework of policies on subregional and international environmental issues over time, on the basis of the Rio Declaration;

(e) Review the institutional and financial arrangements for the subregional cooperation and suggest appropriate mechanisms;

(f) Serve as a forum for sharing experience on policy matters, information exchange, consultation and stocktaking on activities which would promote environmental cooperation in North-East Asia.

4.3 The Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia will be held, in principle, annually in the country of one of the Participating Parties, on a rotating basis.

4.4 The Meeting will work towards practical institutional and financial arrangements for the Programme, as appropriate.

4.5 During the interim period, the support of the ESCAP secretariat to the Meeting of Senior Officials is requested in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank and other relevant institutions, pending the final decision on the future institutional and financial arrangements of the Programme.

5. Participation, coordination and management

5.1 Each Participating Party will designate national focal points whose responsibilities will, inter alia, be the following:

(a) To undertake routine work in connection with the relevant Programme activities;

(b) To act as official channels of communication between the institutions participating in the Programme, the Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia, the ESCAP secretariat and other collaborating agencies and institutions;

(c) To consult and provide guidance to the relevant national institutions in connection with the implementation of the approved projects;

(d) To collate and present information on the implementation of the approved projects and activities, as appropriate;

(e) To assist participating and collaborating institutions and international agencies in undertaking the implementation of the approved projects and activities.

5.2 The activities under the Programme will generally be executed by the secretariat. The Meeting of Senior Officials may also designate one or more agencies to assume overall responsibility for implementing any specific project. The secretariat and the designated agencies will accordingly develop project proposals and activities, including budgetary support requirements, seek funding support and present periodic reports, as desired.

5.3 The participating institutions (such as government agencies, research centres, laboratories, universities, etc.) will be designated by the Participating Parties to implement and carry out the relevant approved activities under the Programme.

5.4 Regional consultants and institutions will be used, to the extent possible, for the implementation of approved projects/activities.

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6. Collaborating agencies

6.1 The United Nations bodies and agencies such as ESCAP, UNDP and UNEP and multilateral financing institutions such as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank are invited to assist in the implementation of the Programme, as their follow-up contribution to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in the North-East Asian subregion in accordance with chapter 38 of Agenda 21. Their technical, financial and managerial support will be sought on a continuing basis to further the work of the Programme. Other collaborating agencies will be invited as necessary.

7. Financial mechanism

7.1 Financial support for the activities of the Programme may be available from the following sources:

(a) Voluntary contributions from the Participating Parties in cash or in kind or both;

(b) Collaborating agencies on a project-funding basis;

(c) Contributions from bilateral and multilateral donors;

(d) The private sector on a project-funding basis;

(e) Other contributions.

7.2 The Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia will strive to reach a consensus on establishing a trust fund, to be funded by donors, collaborating agencies and Participating Parties on a voluntary basis, to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the Programme over a longer time-frame.

8. Criteria for project/activity selection

8.1 Commonality of interests, contribution to capacity-building, priority setting by the countries themselves, the impact on environment and sustainable development efforts, tangible subregional environmental benefits, and cost-effectiveness will be the principal factors in the selection of projects for subregional cooperation.

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OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Contribution of the Commission on Human Settlements to the special session

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 51/181 of 16 December 1996, the General Assembly welcomed the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held at Istanbul from 3 to 14 June 1996, and its relevance to the field of sustainable development, and invited the Commission on Human Settlements to make a contribution to the special session in connection with the implementation of the Habitat Agenda[1] adopted in Istanbul.

2. The Commission, in its resolution 16/24 of 7 May 1997 (see annex I), requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to submit his report (see annex II) to the General Assembly at its special session. The Commission also requested its Chairman to submit the text of Commission resolution 16/24 to the Assembly.

Notes

[1] A/CONF.165/14, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

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Annex I

COMMISSION ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS RESOLUTION 16/24, ADOPTED ON 7 MAY 1997

Special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), in particular, the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda,[1] and of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in particular, Agenda 21,[2]

Recalling General Assembly resolution 47/190 of 22 December 1992, which urged Governments and bodies of the United Nations system to ensure effective follow-up to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21,

Aware that rapid urbanization, the concentration of the urban population in large cities, the sprawl of cities into wider geographical areas and the rapid growth of megacities are among the most significant transformations of human settlements,

Noting that by the year 2005 the majority of the world's population will live in urban areas,

Emphasizing that urban areas will strongly influence the world in the twenty-first century and that urban and rural populations will be increasingly interdependent in their economic, environmental and social well-being,

Convinced that urban settlements, properly planned and managed, hold a promise for human development and for the protection of the world's natural resources through their ability to support large numbers of people while limiting their impact on the natural environment,

Concerned that many cities are witnessing harmful patterns of growth, production and consumption, land use, mobility and the degradation of their physical structure, and noting that such problems are often synonymous with soil, air, and water pollution, the waste of resources and destruction of natural resources,

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[1] Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996 (A/CONF.165/14), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[2] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

Reaffirming that sustainable development is essential for human settlements development and gives full consideration to the needs and necessities of achieving economic growth, social development and environmental protection,

Aware that sustainable urban development requires a consideration of the carrying capacity of the entire ecosystem supporting such development, including the prevention and mitigation of adverse environmental events occurring outside urban areas,

1. Calls on the General Assembly at its special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 to take into account the message of the Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration, namely, that urgent action in cities and human settlements is necessary in order to secure sustainable human settlements and safe and healthy living conditions, especially for urban populations, recognizing the impact of urbanization on all sectors of sustainable human settlements;

2. Invites all relevant specialized agencies and related organizations of the United Nations system, and the Bretton Woods institutions, to strengthen and adjust their activities, programmes and medium-term strategies within their mandates, as appropriate, to take into account the follow-up to Habitat II, particularly at the field level. Relevant governing bodies should examine their relevant policies, programmes, budgets and activities;

3. Requests the Executive Director to promote cooperation and exchange of information between the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in order to inform their intergovernmental machinery of their respective inputs in addressing the questions of sustainable human settlements development;

4. Requests the Executive Director to submit his report on the implementation of Agenda 21,[3] together with the comments made on it by the Commission, to the General Assembly at its special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21;

5. Requests the Chairman of the Commission on Human Settlements to submit the present resolution to the General Assembly at its special session.

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[3] HS/C/16/15 and Corr.1.

Annex II

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT) ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21*

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/190 of 22 December 1992, in which the Assembly urged Governments and bodies of the United Nations system to give effective follow-up to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, and to Commission on Human Settlements resolution 15/12 of 1 May 1995, in which the Commission requested the Executive Director, within available resources, to expand further the Centre's coordinating role in the implementation of the parts of Agenda 21 relating to human settlements and to report on the results of such coordination to the Commission at its sixteenth session. The report summarizes the activities of the Centre and its partners in the pursuit of these objectives within the context of its work programme and its ongoing responsibilities as task manager for the implementation of the human settlements component of Agenda 21.

In paragraph 13 of its resolution 51/181 of 16 December 1996, entitled "Special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21", the General Assembly welcomed the outcome of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and its relevance to sustainable development, and called for effective interaction and exchange of information on the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Commission on Human Settlements. It also invited the Commission on Human Settlements to contribute to the special session of the General Assembly in connection with the implementation of the Habitat Agenda adopted in Istanbul. In addition, by paragraph 14 of resolution 51/177 of 16 December 1996, on implementation of the outcome of Habitat II, the General Assembly recommended that, at its special session, the Assembly should give due attention to the issue of human settlements in the context of sustainable development.

Accordingly, the views and decision of the Commission on the attached report will be submitted to the special session of the General Assembly, pursuant to the provisions of the two above-mentioned resolutions of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session.

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* Originally issued under the symbol HS/C/16/15 and Corr.1.

INTRODUCTION

1. Rapid urbanization, the concentration of urban population in large cities, the spread of cities into wider geographical areas and the rapid growth of megacities are among the most significant transformations of our time. Urban settlements hold promise for the protection and careful use of the world's natural resources through their ability to support large numbers of people while limiting their impact on the natural environment. Human settlements should be, therefore, at the centre of concern for sustainable development, as they are for social and economic progress and, in an increasingly interdependent world, critical for the well-being of both urban and rural populations (see box 1).

I. SELECTING KEY OBJECTIVES

2. In the five years since the Earth Summit, numerous Agenda 21-related activities to advance sustainable and gender-sensitive human settlements development, decisions of the Commission on Human Settlements, of CSD and of other governing bodies of programmes and agencies of the United Nations, and the Habitat II conference and its preparatory process have led to the emergence of the following four priorities: first, shelter for all; second, improved urban management capacity; third, improved environmental infrastructure and services; and, fourth, inclusive and gender-sensitive human settlements plans and strategies, including local Agendas 21. Priorities for international support to human settlements development over the five years since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) have focused on policy advice; capacity-building; partnerships with local authorities and other major groups, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations; and networking and exchange of best practices in human settlements development and management.

3. The effort made during the five years since the Earth Summit in carrying out numerous activities to advance sustainable human settlements development is commendable. In many significant ways, the preparatory process for the Habitat II conference served to accelerate this process and acted as a catalyst for the launching of new activities as well as for furthering United Nations system-wide collaboration. The Habitat Agenda not only represents a reconfirmation of Agenda 21, it provides a holistic, operational framework for implementing the relevant decisions and recommendations of a decade of United Nations conferences.

Box 1

Multiple goals of sustainable development as applied to cities

Meeting the needs of the present ...	**...without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs**
• *Economic needs*: These include access to adequate livelihood or productive assets from which such livelihood can be gained; also minimum income or economic security when unemployed, ill, disabled or otherwise unable to secure livelihood. • *Social, cultural and health needs*: These include a shelter which is healthy, safe, affordable and secure, within a healthy neighborhood environment with provision for piped water, sanitation, drainage, transport, health care, education and child development. They also include a home, workplace and living environment protected from environmental hazards, including chemical pollution. Equally important are needs related to people's choice and control - including homes, neighborhoods which they value and where their social and cultural needs and priorities are met. Shelters and services must meet the specific needs of children, adolescents and adults responsible for child-rearing (usually women). Achieving this implies a more equitable distribution of income within and between nations. • *Political needs*: These include the freedom to participate in national and local politics and in decisions regarding the management and development of people's own homes and neighborhoods - within a broader framework which ensures respect for civil and political rights and respect for environmental legislation.	• *Sustainable use of renewable resources*: This includes cities drawing on freshwater resources at levels which can be sustained; keeping to a sustainable ecological level with regard to the land area on which producers and consumers in any city draw for agricultural crops, wood products and biomass fuels. • *Minimizing use of waste of non-renewable resources*: This includes minimizing consumption of fossil fuels in housing, commerce, industry and transport plus substituting renewable sources where feasible and reducing use and minimizing waste of scarce mineral resources (reducing use, reusing, recycling, reclaiming). There are also cultural, historical and natural assets within cities which are irreplaceable and thus non-renewable - for instance, historic districts and parks and natural landscapes which provide city inhabitants with space for play, recreation and access to nature. • *Wastes from cities keeping within the absorptive capacity of local and global sinks*: This includes the capacity of rivers to break down biodegradable wastes and methods to deal with persistent chemicals, including greenhouse gases, stratospheric ozone depleting chemicals and persistent pesticides.

Source: Mitlin, Diana and David Satterthwaite, *Cities and Sustainable Development*, the background paper to Global Forum '94, Manchester City Council, June 1994.

II. REPORTING ON AND ANALYSING SUCCESS

A. Shelter for all

4. Since UNCED, 80 countries have drafted new, or reformulated their existing housing policies in line with the recommendations of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. These new shelter strategies emphasize an enabling legislative and regulatory framework to facilitate the construction and improvement of housing by communities, the private sector and individual families. A major objective of these strategies is to accelerate the construction and improvement of housing for and by low-income groups. The focus, furthermore, has been on strategies which are environmentally sustainable, especially in regard to land-use, building technologies and materials employed, as set out in Agenda 21, and as reconfirmed in the Habitat Agenda. Emphasis is also given to the need to develop efficient land and housing markets which broaden access to security of tenure and credit, a goal which is linked, and in many ways dependent, on progress in the broader areas of economic reform. Formulation of new national shelter strategies has been assisted in a number of countries by efforts on the part of Habitat and the World Bank, most notably, in assisting over 100 countries to develop quantitative policy sensitive housing and urban indicators to help set priorities and guide the policy formulation process.

5. One of the key commitments entered into by Governments in adopting the Habitat Agenda is to work towards the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing. Efforts in this direction will, first and foremost, aim at expanding access to housing for low-income groups and will address such key issues as security of tenure. The commitment to the right to adequate housing is considered one of the key achievements of Habitat II and opens the way to further progress in shelter accessibility in the coming years.

6. In most countries that formulated such strategies, the process of implementation has begun. This will be given added impetus as nations engage broader legislation and policy reforms. The implementation of enabling shelter strategies requires support by a broad constituency, which must include local authorities and the private sector. It is hoped that grassroots initiatives encouraged by Habitat II will contribute to making such partnerships concrete.

B. Improved urban management capacity

7. The second key objective in implementing chapter 7 of Agenda 21 is management improvement and capacity-building in order to assist local authorities to face the challenge of rapid urbanization and environmental sustainability. Experience has demonstrated that a strongly participatory approach to urban management results in increased commitment of key actors and stakeholders. Increased awareness of the value of stakeholder involvement in human settlements support programmes is resulting in projects with a higher rate of successful implementation and replication. Local authority associations and

organizations have also increasingly strengthened their networking internationally, regionally and nationally, setting the basis for productive partnerships in support of improving local self-government as an essential element in capacity-building.

8. The Urban Management Programme has emerged, since UNCED, as the principal United Nations system-wide effort to improve urban management capacity in developing countries. The Urban Management Programme is the largest global multi-agency technical support programme in the field of urban development and is currently active in 55 countries with the support of 10 bilateral external support agencies. Operating through its four regional offices, the Urban Management Programme promotes coherent urban policies, the strengthening of urban management and the enhancement of municipal services in support of sustainable local development. The principal methods of work are capacity-building at both country and regional levels, facilitating dialogue on policy and programme options which draw on developing country experts, and developing mechanisms for technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC).

9. A number of new programmes have been launched in the post-Rio period. The most successful of these are multi-agency programmes such as the Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP). As a joint UNCHS (Habitat)-UNEP facility promoting participatory approaches to environment planning and management, SCP spearheads United Nations efforts in this field, and its work over the last five years has catalyzed similar initiatives by others. Working closely with the UNCHS (Habitat)/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/World Bank Urban Management Programme, as well as with a large number of bilateral assistance agencies, SCP has launched demonstration projects in cities across four continents to build capacities in environmental planning and management. SCP has also played a leading role in supporting networking between cities, enhancing information flow at the local level, and encouraging the sharing of lessons of experience at the city level. In cooperation with the Urban Management Programme, SCP held three international conferences on environmental strategies for cities, culminating in the meeting on "Implementing the Urban Environment Agenda (IUEA)", which took place in Istanbul on the eve of the Habitat II conference. Cooperation among international support programmes at the global level, as demonstrated by the success of the IUEA meeting, is leading towards increased complementarity and better cooperation, as well as to further steps to institutionalize cooperation and joint programming among agencies and other interested parties working in the urban sector.

10. Another programme of global coverage with more than 1,000 cities participating worldwide, is the Healthy Cities Programme of the World Health Organization (WHO). In this Programme, cities have subscribed to the development of municipal health plans for the improvement of the human environment, better health care facilities and a variety of health promotion activities. A series of regional follow-up meetings sponsored by WHO and Habitat II have helped to strengthen and expand the Programme's national and regional networks.

11. Finally, it must also be pointed out that since UNCED, a substantial shift has taken place in the orientation of the field of management and planning in disaster-prone areas. In response to the increasing peace-keeping and peacemaking responsibilities of the United Nations since the Rio Conference, the emphasis has shifted dramatically to the management of reconstruction and rebuilding activities in war-torn societies, away from preventative planning and management capacity-building in anticipation of natural disasters. Approximately 95 per cent of the funding available to the United Nations system in this field is currently directed at addressing the aftermath of human-made disasters. Whereas this development can be seen positively, as a response on the part of the international community to unanticipated challenges, the relative neglect of efforts aimed at natural disaster prevention and mitigation over the past years could carry with it serious consequences. The work that has been done in this latter area of concern has been limited by resource constraints, although it is potentially strategic in its impact, such as the focus of the International Decade on National Disaster Reduction on disaster reduction by building a culture of prevention in its 1996 "Cities at Risk" public awareness campaign and the UNEP/UNCHS (Habitat) Strategic Action Plan for the Great Lakes Region of Africa. But it is clear that very little can be done by a few agencies with limited resources, since a broad system-wide effort is required with strong financial support.

C. Improved environmental infrastructure and services

12. The lack of infrastructure and services underlies many of the most serious health problems which are evident in all regions. Improved water, sanitation, waste management and drainage not only reduce the disease burden, but improve the quality of life in general, in particular for women and small children, who spend most of their time in the home. One of the most promising ways to improve the quality and range of infrastructure services for the urban poor is to draw on the resources and experience of the communities themselves. Over the past years national and international non-governmental organizations in many of developing country cities have demonstrated that much can be achieved even with modest resources. The successes have been achieved as a result of programmes undertaken by grassroots organizations. Most external support agencies have increased the priority which they give to working in partnership with the private sector and community groups, in order to improve urban infrastructure and services. Accordingly, much of the work of the UNICEF Basic Urban Services Programme and the UNCHS (Habitat)/Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)-supported Community Development Programme and Settlements Infrastructure and Environment Programme has been directed at developing appropriate demonstration projects to support grassroots and non-governmental organization efforts and their effective replication.

13. Over the past five years most external support agencies have increased the priority which they give to working in partnership with the private sector and community groups in order to improve urban infrastructure and services. Significantly, an increasing share of financial commitments have been made in integrated urban development programmes that combine investments in different kinds of urban infrastructure and services. Many of these projects incorporate a capacity-building component to strengthen local authorities. Multilateral

financial institutions, in particular, have increased their lending with regard to urban pollution control (see box 2).

Box 2

Examples of project loans made in 1993 by the World Bank for the control of pollution

China: $250 million committed to the Southern Jiangsu Environmental Protection Project, that will focus on cost-effective water-pollution control investments in urban and industrial projects. It will also strengthen the institutional, regulatory and environmental management capabilities of local agencies. Southern Jiangsu region is one of China's most industrialized areas.

Mexico: $220 million committed to the Transport Air Quality Management Project for Mexico City Metropolitan Area, a government programme to reduce pollution in Mexico City, that is being supported by technical and financial assistance in developing low-emission vehicles and in the conversion or replacement of old high-use vehicles. It will also help finance the installation of vapour-recovery systems at petrol stations.

Brazil: $245 million committed to the São Paulo Water Quality and Pollution-Control Project. The goal is to implement a cost-effective approach to controlling water pollution in two of the most congested and polluted metropolitan areas of the country. This will be achieved through the creation of two urban water-basin authorities - for the Guarapiranga river near São Paulo and for the upper Iguaçu river in Curitiba - and the financing of water pollution-control investments.

Source: UNCHS (Habitat), An Urbanizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements 1996, Oxford University Press, p. 395.

14. There is a growing awareness that urban technical cooperation should focus, in the long term, on developing the capacity of national and local governments to plan, invest in and manage urban infrastructure, and on mobilizing the resources of all local actors, especially of the private sector. The challenge, however is enormous. By 1994, more than one billion people in urban and rural settlements were without suitable water supply. Even this figure, high as it is, can be misleading. The UNCHS (Habitat) Indicators Programme has collected data on the proportion of dwelling units with a water connection in the plot they occupy. This has been shown to be a more reliable indicator of coverage than water available at a "convenient distance". In terms of coverage, the drawing of city boundaries that exclude a significant proportion of the peri-urban or peripheral settlements often also means that statistics are skewed or incomplete.

15. A milestone in building global awareness on the impending urban water crisis was reached at the Beijing Water Conference in March 1996. Held in conjunction with World Water Day 1996, the conference focused unprecedented global media attention on the looming water crisis, especially in rapidly growing cities. Almost all of the world's major cities are today facing either serious shortfalls in water supply, in water quality, or both. The Beijing Water Conference has already led to a number of follow-up consultations at the international level remedial action, involving, in particular, the World Bank and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Water Resources. It also directly influenced recommendations of the Habitat II conference, which endorsed, inter alia, the Beijing Water Declaration. Urban water supply and water management have emerged as a high priority for implementing the human settlements components of Agenda 21 over the course of the next decade.

16. Developing country cities face an equally daunting challenge in the area of sanitation. Present projections for the provision of sanitation to the year 2000 show that, if not improved, more than half the world's population will be without adequate sanitation, with all the attendant health risks that this implies, especially in urban areas with large concentrations of population. The situation is further complicated by the poverty of those without access to this most basic of services. Here, as in the case of water supply and waste management, the direct relationship between poverty and environmental decay and decline in the quality of life of people in urban areas is most evident. For poverty and environmental degradation are connected in two ways. First, poverty is often a result of environmental degradation. Second, poverty is often its cause. At the same time, the urban poor have demonstrated considerable initiative in improving their immediate environment, especially through recycling initiatives, thus becoming true ecological pioneers in their respective cities and communities. This creativity must be promoted. Given the scale of needs, the most effective approach has been the one that supports city and neighborhood-based efforts which mobilize the energies of the affected population. Some United Nations programmes which take this approach include the WHO Healthy Cities Programme, the UNCHS (Habitat)/UNEP Sustainable Cities Programme, the UNICEF Basic Urban Services Programme and the UNDP Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment (LIFE).

D. National and local human settlements strategies, including local Agendas 21

17. Since UNCED, and as a direct result of the Habitat II preparatory process, 138 countries have prepared detailed reports on the state of their human settlements: 127 of these contain first-step, five-year national plans of action for sustainable human settlements development prepared in line with the guidelines established by the Preparatory Committee for the Habitat II Conference. Most of these plans were prepared by broad-based national committees consisting of national government agencies and relevant ministries, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations, local authorities and the private sector. National plans of action were formulated on the basis of an assessment of shelter and human settlements situations, and locally

established priorities for action. In many countries, the preparation of these national plans of action was informed by lessons learned from best practices in improving the living environment and by housing and urban indicators, collected and analysed with the financial and technical assistance of a number of donors, including the World Bank, UNCHS (Habitat) and several bilateral external support agencies. The inclusive nature of plan preparation, the information component of these plans provided by the indicators and best practices initiatives, as well the substantial donor interest in their preparation, should help to ensure that these plans will not only benefit from broad-based political and social support, but also will be more likely to be translated into tangible policies and programmes able to elicit both local and international support and financing.

18. These national plans also demonstrate commonalities, which point the way to the emerging priorities in the shelter and human settlements area and the ways and means they have to be addressed over the coming years. Most plans stress the greater involvement of civil society and of major groups. Almost without exception, they emphasize the need to strengthen local authorities in their decision-making powers and in their managerial and financial capacities. The vast majority of them call for greater attention to access to housing by low-income groups and endorse the enabling role of the public sector. Further, what emerges from these national reports is that for developing countries, the direct linkages between environmental improvement and the reduction of poverty through the provision of basic infrastructure such as water supply, sanitation and waste management and disposal is given priority attention. Environmental issues in the urban areas of developing countries are indeed directly tied to the improvement of health and to poverty eradication. Environmental infrastructure is increasingly seen as a principal means by which to achieve these goals. The national reports of industrialized countries, on the other hand, reflect their concern with the sustainability of production and consumption cycles in human settlements and their impact on the quality of life. In all countries, without exception, resource mobilization and identification of new sources of finance for sustainable human settlements development is a prime necessity. Ensuring the financial viability of local institutions is also a top priority, for without such viable institutions, sustainable development cannot be achieved at the local level.

19. Assiduous follow-up of these priorities will certainly influence the ultimate success of local Agendas 21, which, since UNCED, have proliferated and must be considered one of the major achievements of the post-UNCED implementation process. Since 1992, increased community and local authority activism has led to over 1,800 local Agenda 21 initiatives in cities and communities around the world to improve the living environment in human settlements (see box 3). An important contribution to the accelerated pace of local Agenda 21 initiatives has been the work of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), which works closely with local authorities and their associations as well as a number of donors. One of the principal aims of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda will be to strengthen local Agenda 21 initiatives and to support their replication world-wide. The Habitat II process benefited from the community activism set in motion by local Agendas 21 and the goals of Agenda 21 and the Habitat Agenda are especially complementary and mutually supportive at the local level.

Box 3

Developing local Agendas 21

Hundreds of local authorities around the world are developing local Agendas 21 as the means to introduce or strengthen environmental concerns in their plans and operations. Local Agenda 21 processes differ from city to city since they reflect the different local contexts in which they are operative as well as the existing institutional structures.

Some countries have national programmes of support for such initiatives including Australia, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In the United Kingdom, such initiatives include: promoting local consultative processes on sustainable development; disseminating guidance for United Kingdom local authorities on how to move towards sustainability at a local level and on how to develop models of community consultation, participation and local consensus building; and involving other sectors and major groups in the local Agenda 21 process at a national level.

In Sweden, all local authorities have environmental strategies that include provision for waste minimization and recycling. Most municipalities have also started work on local Agendas 21. Several European countries are exploring the possibilities of linking work on local Agenda 21 to formal land-use planning systems. For instance, the city of Stockholm is currently preparing a new plan which takes a more strategic and longer term view than previous plans and will explicitly promote the integration of environmental, social and economic goals. The new plan will become part of the local Agenda 21 for the city. In Denmark, existing planning instruments are being adapted to Agenda 21 requirements so that municipal plans become overall action plans for the environment not only nationally, but also in the context of Europe.

A large number of local authorities in developing countries have also developed local Agendas 21. For instance, each of the municipalities which make up the Bogotá metropolitan area in Colombia is developing its own local environmental agenda, sponsored by the metropolitan authority, non-governmental organizations and academics. Other urban centres in Colombia, such as Manizales, also have a well-established local Agendas 21 process. Among other cities in the South that are developing local Agendas 21 are Cajamarca in Peru, Durban in South Africa and Santos in Brazil. ICLEI is expanding its collaboration with African countries in the area of local Agenda 21 initiatives.

Source: UNCHS (Habitat), An Urbanizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements 1996, Oxford University Press, pp. 407-9.

III. PROMISING CHANGES

A. Integrated Management Approaches

20. With increasing urbanization and the trend towards more urbanized societies, greater emphasis must be expected on urban settlements in the work of United Nations agencies and others. Experience over the past five years shows that this is already happening. Along with this shift, which will most likely accelerate over the coming decades, has come the recognition, from the experience of work on the ground, that sectoral priorities are mutually dependent and have to be linked conceptually and at the operational level. In fact, there is virtually not a single area of settlements development that is not dependent on coordinated, simultaneous and continuous interaction with other sectors. All this has led, in turn, to a wider appreciation of the necessary role of urban management to coordinate sectoral development activities. Inter-sectoral connectivity and integrated management approaches are critical to achieving efficiency and effectiveness and for promoting, in toto, sustainable development at the local, and ultimately, at the national and global levels. This recognition has gone hand-in-hand with the understanding, broadly shared now in the development community, that one of the most persistent obstacles to progress in sustainable development and maintaining growth is insufficient institutional and human capacity in such core fields as urban management, public administration and operations and maintenance, and not just at the local level. This explains the emphasis given today to local capacity-building by multilateral and bilateral donors, financing institutions and other external support agencies, as well as by non-governmental organizations and local authority associations over the past years. This issue is also closely tied to the broader issue of improvement of governance and management, which has increasingly become a focus of governmental efforts worldwide. Countries and cities are increasingly competing globally for investments, with the understanding that good governance is a precondition both for people-centered sustainable development and for sustainable economic growth.

B. Broad-based participatory approaches

21. Central to virtually each of the success stories referred to previously has been the involvement and increased activism of major groups, especially local authorities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. In fact, all indications point to a future strategic role for United Nations agencies in promoting sustainable development, by concentrating on facilitating new partnerships. The global and regional exchange of new knowledge and expertise derived from local best practices, as well as new networks among major groups active in human settlements development will need to be supported. Moreover, the experience of such programmes as the Sustainable Cities Programme, the Healthy Cities Programme and the Urban Management Programme, to cite just three examples, clearly demonstrates that United Nations agencies, because of their perceived neutrality, can play a pivotal role in bringing together actors, from governmental departments to community organizations, to discuss problems, identify priorities and decide on joint actions.

22. Community involvement in decision-making and implementation at the local level normally has outcomes which have an immediate and visible effect on people's lives. Such inclusive strategies also increase the likelihood of compliance with agreed upon action, particularly if they have financial implications. In other words, people are more likely to pay for new and improved services, for cleaner water, cleaner air and for better transport, if they have been part of the decision-making process leading to such improvements.

23. Looking ahead, it seems obvious that the rate of success of plans of action and national policies will depend on the extent to which they are anchored in civil society and can generate local commitments, whether from the business community or the people. The times are over when policy and programme development, planning, financing and execution were primarily matters between government agencies and development institutions.

24. The above observations are validated by the unprecedented call and experience of the Habitat II process. In most countries, this process resulted in broad-based dialogues between the Government and civil society. These dialogues identified priority issues of common concern as well as ways and means to address them. Similarly, the active participation of local authorities and their associations in the Habitat II preparatory process has strengthened the networking of local authorities internationally and regionally, setting the basis for a new working relationship and partnership between them and the United Nations at the international and local levels, a partnership which these associations specifically requested at Istanbul. The establishment of such partnerships between the United Nations and major groups has been, all along, one of the principal goals of Agenda 21, and the significant progress achieved in them must be seen as a major accomplishment of Habitat II. In fact, it has become evident that the implementation and follow-up process of the Habitat II conference and its plan of action is being driven by the expectations of these groups of partners as well as by member States, and this also has implications for the implementation of Agenda 21 in the years ahead, and not just in the area of human settlements.

C. Increased cooperation and networking

25. As a direct consequence of recommendations of CSD and the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) in 1994, more than a dozen multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies began discussions leading to the formation of the so-called "Urban Forum", to serve as a vehicle for information exchange, and joint programming in the field of sustainable human settlements development. Other specialized urban forums, such as the Urban Environment Forum and the Urban Poverty Forum, are also associated with the Urban Forum through their networks. Taken altogether, these initiatives point the way towards more cost-effective pooling of resources among United Nations agencies in the accomplishment of shared goals. The success of the Day of Local Authorities at the third session of CSD in 1995 and the joint publication by local authorities and their organizations (ICLEI, United Towns Development Agency (UTDA) and the "G4+" associations of local authorities) with Habitat and

UNEP of the book Making Cities Work have also served to focus attention on the critical role of local authorities as custodians of the urban environment.

26. A key to future progress lies in networking among all the partners and groups of partners. Considerable recent progress has been made here. First, with the establishment of the Huairou Commission as a high-level advisory board to UNCHS (Habitat) and other United Nations agencies composed of grassroots women, non-governmental organization women, women politicians, activists, researchers and United Nations women, has been instrumental in ensuring that women's issues remain a priority in the Habitat Agenda. Major progress has also been achieved by local authorities and their associations in establishing city networks to exchange information, experience, and to promote city-to-city cooperation on specific issues. Further efforts are being made in this regard to consolidate a global network linking United Nations-sponsored networks with those of international associations of cities and those established, for example, by ICLEI in the course of its work to promote local Agenda 21 initiatives.

27. Among the most promising new and innovative tools for exchanging the lessons of operational experience and for the advancement of collective know-how for local sustainable development has been the elaboration and exchange of best practices in human settlements development and management, which was established during the Habitat II preparatory process and endorsed by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. Encouraged by Habitat, over 700 cities, communities and organizations in more than 90 countries documented best practices, which have been disseminated worldwide, and highlighted at the Conference in Istanbul. Given the positive response to this undertaking, efforts are now under way to establish a global network of capacity-building institutions actively engaged in the exchange of best practice knowledge, expertise and experience with support from the private sector and using the latest information technology to allow for easy local and global access. Parallel to this, another promising step is that over 100 countries around the world have adopted urban and housing indicators as tools to inform policy-making in the human settlements sector. This effort has been supported by UNCHS (Habitat) and the World Bank working with several bilateral organizations, generating a shared and consistent body of data on which to base future policies and programmes. Moreover, as a result of close collaboration between the CSD Secretariat and Habitat, six of the human settlements indicators adopted by the Commission on Human Settlements have also been incorporated in the CSD work programme on indicators for sustainable development (see box 4).

28. To consolidate the impact of these programmes, the Commission on Human Settlements, at its fifteenth session, requested the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) to establish a "global housing and urban observatory" to permit comparative international evaluation of progress in meeting the aims of the Habitat Agenda and to draw attention to and provide information on human settlements conditions worldwide. To carry out this mandate Habitat is bringing together its Indicators Programme and Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme to constitute the substantive core of the Global Urban Observatory. The objective of the Global Urban Observatory is to help Governments, local

authorities and other partners to develop their knowledge of changing human settlements conditions, both locally and globally, and their capacity to formulate and adopt appropriate policies and implement effective strategies for sustainable human settlements development.

D. International commitments

29. At the Habitat II conference, 171 countries committed themselves to sustainable human settlements development. Both the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda underscored the fundamental importance, of sustainable human settlements to sustained growth, sustainable development and to achieving the objectives of Agenda 21 in a rapidly urbanizing and globalizing world. The Habitat Agenda, therefore, represents a reconfirmation of Agenda 21 in general and its human settlements related programmes in particular. It provides a holistic, operational framework for implementing relevant decisions and recommendations of a decade of United Nations conferences. It sets out, in further detail, actions to be undertaken in four key areas: shelter; environmental sustainability of settlements focusing on basic services and infrastructure; institutional development and capacity-building; and monitoring and assessment. Furthermore, the conference was open to major groups in an unprecedented fashion, through its dialogues, forums and the series of "hearings" held by its Committee II. This process elicited the views of representatives of major groups, from local authorities to parliamentarians and professional organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, trade unions, youth groups and United Nations agencies, on the plan of action, as well as their own commitments to its implementation, thus substantially increasing prospects for successful follow-up.

30. On another level, the Habitat Agenda also provides clear and detailed expression of the local environmental agenda and priorities of developing countries, which are focused on essential services, such as, inter alia, water supply, sanitation and waste management, and are informed by the relationship between poverty and environmental decline, and thus the need for sustainable economic growth to address both. Their cross-cutting nature also clearly links the discrete and sectoral chapters of Agenda 21 to sustainable human settlements development.

IV. UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS

31. Given the physical expansion of cities and towns, concomitant population growth and the transformation in and modernization of agriculture in many developing countries, it has become increasingly self-evident that land and land management policies should not be dealt with separately at the urban and rural levels, but rather in an integrated manner. The need for such a comprehensive approach is further called for given the environmental impact of city growth - the so-called "ecological footprint" of the city, as well as the need to manage land issues, often contentious, between city and agricultural needs, including questions of land markets and land tenure, especially on the expanding urban periphery, which has become a jurisdictional "no man's land" in many cities.

The absence of a comprehensive national land policy in many countries, with jurisdiction over land policy and land management often dispersed over a number of national, regional and local bodies and agencies, was clearly identified as a major issue during the preparatory process for Habitat II. It is, quite simply, one of the principal constraints in most countries to achieving sustainable human settlement development and sustainable use of land and water resources, both for agriculture and for settlement needs. Up to now, however, only limited progress has been made towards the establishment of comprehensive national policies and appropriate institutional arrangements. Mirroring the fragmentation in matters of land at the national level, the agencies of the United Nations system active in the area of social and economic development have also, as yet, not been able to cooperate effectively in the critical area of land management although efforts to remedy this have started. The proposal of an inter-agency land management programme, which was submitted by UNCHS (Habitat) to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNDP and the World Bank, would not only rationalize current system-wide efforts, but could also become a source of comprehensive and consistent policy advice and assistance to requesting Governments, thus facilitating in a significant way progress not only in the area of human settlements, but in a number of other key chapters of Agenda 21 as well.

Box 4

Policy-sensitive indicators for sustainable human settlements development as adopted by both CSD and the Commission on Human Settlements

Indicator	Defined as...
Floor area per person	the median usable living space per person
Housing price to income ratio	the ratio of the median free-market price of a dwelling unit and the median annual household income
Travel time for work trips	the average time for travel from home to work, including waiting time
Infrastructure expenditure per capita	the ratio of total expenditure in US dollars by all levels of government (including private utilities and parastatals) on infrastructure services during the current year, and the urban population
Housing loans	the proportion of dwellings that have housing loans from the formal financial sector
Transport fuel consumption per capita	the annual number of litres per person of transport fuel consumed by surface transport

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32. Given the rates of urbanization in developing countries and subsequent new needs for services and infrastructure in human settlements, as well as housing (not to speak of the tremendous backlog in these areas, especially in the poorest countries), it is somewhat alarming to note that apart from increased lending on environmental infrastructure by a number of regional and international financial institutions, as well as some private and public financial entities, which together only cover a tiny fraction of needs, not much progress has been made on developing new mechanisms for sustained financing, on the scale required for building, operating and maintaining of basic services and infrastructure (see box 5).

33. Related to the above is the fact that, as cities grow, their transport problems get worse, because the number of motor vehicles and their level of use grows even faster than income, population, and investment in infrastructure and transport facilities, prompting further congestion and environmental decay. It is particularly disheartening to note that the pace of motorization has led to policy paralysis in many countries and cities, despite recognition that something has to be done. The prohibitive costs of transport infrastructure, plus the political problems to be overcome, related to more rational land-use planning and promotion of mass and non-motorized forms of transport, raise the prospects of further deterioration in the quality of life in cities.

34. During the Habitat II preparatory process, the World Bank and UNCHS (Habitat) initiated together a series of consultations on financing strategies for human settlements and shelter. These efforts now need to be pursued and put into practice. There is no doubt that much greater private sector involvement is required, as well as greater mobilization of local resources through improved service charge mechanisms and revenue collection. There are very defined limits, however, to what the urban poor themselves can contribute, in cash or in kind. An improvement in housing, infrastructure and services must go hand-in-hand with economic development policies that produce sustained and significant growth and employment. There is no doubt that there is a symbiotic relationship between infrastructure and services, on the one hand, and economic growth, on the other. This leads to the proverbial "chicken or egg" argument. Which comes first? All indications are that countries that do not have sufficient levels of urban infrastructure and services, as well as good urban management, are being sidelined by the economic changes and globalization processes under way. When cities do not work, investment does not take place, either from national or from foreign sources. And when cities fail, economies of countries tend to fail. Likewise, social exclusion and discriminatory policies and practices must be replaced by the promotion of social cohesion and human solidarity.

Box 5

Government expenditures per person on water supply, sanitation, drainage, garbage collection, roads and electricity

Income grouping, cities in:	US$ per person	Regional grouping, cities in:	US$ per person
Low-income countries	15.0	Sub-Saharan Africa	16.6
Low-middle-income countries	31.4	South Asia	15.0
Middle-income countries	40.1	East Asia	72.5
Middle-high-income countries	304.6	Latin America and the Caribbean	48.4
High-income countries	813.5	Eastern Europe, Greece, North Africa and the Middle East	86.2
		Western Europe, North America, Australia	656.0

Source: The Housing Indicators Programme Volume III; Preliminary Findings, joint programme of UNCHS (Habitat) and the World Bank, Washington, D.C., April 1993.

V. EMERGING PRIORITIES

A. Responding to national needs and priorities

35. In preparation for Habitat II, over 130 countries formulated first-step, five-year national plans of action for sustainable human settlements development. The implementation of these plans provides the operational and programmatic framework for international assistance and further provides for the focus for assistance on substantive priority areas which have been identified at the national and local level.

B. Linking the normative and analytical processes

36. The monitoring of progress in implementing the human settlements components of Agenda 21 and of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda provides an opportunity for linking policy development with the analysis of the information generated by national and local plans of action. Lessons learned from best practices in improving the living environment and the development of normative benchmarks based on urban and shelter indicators should help ensure that the implementation of plans of action will be translated into new policy reforms and strategies. These in turn should illicit both local and international support, investment and financing. This will be a major area of concentration of UNCHS and its partners in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

C. Forging new partnerships and dialogue between major groups

37. The broad-based participatory processes launched by the vast majority of countries in preparation for Habitat II provide a solid foundation for the development of strategic partnerships among major groups, notably, governments at all levels, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations and the private sector. Continued international support in strengthening and nurturing civic engagement, popular participation and partnership should provide added impetus to ongoing efforts in urban management and governance. Emphasis should be placed on networking, both among these groups, and between them and the United Nations system. The multiple benefits of the participation of major groups at this international conference will have a major impact on the implementation of the global plan of action adopted at Habitat II. These are also reflected in current efforts to involve representatives of local authorities and their associations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the work of the Commission on Human Settlements as called for in the Habitat Agenda. Notable among these partnerships is the work of the women within the Huairou Commission, in relation to the continuous monitoring of the Habitat Agenda from a gender perspective.

D. Integrated approaches to addressing sectoral priorities

38. Since it is within human settlements that the many issues of common importance to poverty reduction and sustainable development converge, the Habitat Agenda provides a useful organizing framework for integrated and holistic approaches for the implementation of relevant goals of many of the sectoral chapters of Agenda 21. Implementation will require, however, that the United Nations system become more systematic in promoting participatory processes, more comprehensive in its approach to the processes of human settlement and urbanization and more inclusive in its activities. By using the framework provided by the Habitat Agenda and the national plans of action, implementation support will be based increasingly on cross-sectoral and cross-institutional linkages and should provide through the use of, inter alia, indicators and best practices, the means by which to assess the local impacts of social, economic and environmental dimensions of Agenda 21.

E. New paradigms for capacity-building

39. A key emerging priority will be capacity-building, particularly at the local level, to implement:

(a) National shelter strategies in order to achieve adequate shelter for all;

(b) Land management and policy reforms to achieve well functioning land markets and security of tenure;

(c) The application of economic instruments to urban development and the mobilization of domestic and international financial resources;

(d) Legal and policy frameworks in support of public-private partnerships;

(e) Policies, strategies and technologies for solid-waste management, recycling and reuse;

(f) Policies for water-demand management and the reduction of water wastage;

(g) Training and management development systems;

(h) Information systems based on spatially desegregated intra-urban data for more effective human settlements management and policy and decision-making;

(i) The institutionalization of participatory and consultative processes and the mobilization of civic engagement;

(j) The fostering of social integration and human solidarity; and

(k) Policies and systems for disaster preparedness and mitigation.

40. These priorities for capacity-building, which are compatible with priorities contained in national reports for Habitat II, should help build up the institutional and human capital needed for the implementation of the plans of action and of local Agendas 21.

F. Creating an information and communication system for the exchange of knowledge, expertise and experience

41. A major contribution of the Habitat Agenda to implementing Agenda 21 lies in the initial development of effective information and communication systems, using new information technologies wherever possible to facilitate the sharing and exchange of knowledge, expertise and experience gained at the national and local level. Networking, information exchange and communication, modern methods, should greatly facilitate the sharing and exchange of, inter alia, best practice expertise and experience, the use of policy-sensitive shelter and urban indicators, and the transfer of technology in development.

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OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Letter dated 9 June 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the outcome of the World Solar Summit, held at Harare in September 1996, for use as a document of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly under item 8 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Machivenyika T. MAPURANGA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

WORLD SOLAR SUMMIT

WORLD SOLAR PROGRAMME 1996 - 2005 : An Outline

1. INTRODUCTION

This outline of the proposed World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (WSP) to be launched at the World Solar Summit on 16-17 September 1996 in Harare, Zimbabwe is an attempt to briefly state the most salient features of the WSP and its determining activity, the World Solar Summit Process.

The WSP is an open-ended attempt through broad partnership and co-operation of governments and organizations to promote the adoption and wider utilization of renewable energy sources. This will be achieved through the setting of agreed targets, appropriate standards, cooperation mechanisms, incentives and pooling of resources. The major benefits to be derived from the WSP include the enhancement of the quality of life of large numbers of people, particularly in the rural areas, and the creation of additional employment through the development of new enterprises. The WSP is a response to the challenge posed by the Earth Summit which requires all countries to institute appropriate measures for reducing pollution by introducing clean technology - hence, the WSP will set us off on the 'solar highway' leading to sustainable development.

The WSP will evolve over the decade 1996-2005 through the development and implementation of high-priority national, regional and global projects, under the leadership and guidance of the World Solar Commission.

2. BACKGROUND

Rapid political, social and economic changes are taking place everywhere, bringing both hope and despair to individuals in different parts of the world. As far as energy is concerned, the world today seems to have been polarized. The 75% of humanity living in the developing countries account for only 25% of global energy consumption. More than one billion people in the developing countries have no source of energy available to them other than the traditional ones (fuelwood and other forms of biomass). More than two billion people in these countries have no access to electricity. It was in its endeavour to take up the challenge of providing these people with their basic minimum energy needs that UNESCO, in a broad-based partnership with the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, international organizations and concerned governmental and non-governmental organizations, launched in 1993 a global initiative: a three-year long communication process known as the World Solar Summit Process (WSSP). The objectives of the WSSP were to enhance the global understanding of the role that renewable energies can play in providing clean energies to billions of people in far and remote areas of the developing countries of the world, creating

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new employment opportunities, improving health services, contributing to the preservation of the environment and, in addition, developing and reinforcing the spirit of international co-operation through inter-regional communication and exchange of expertise and technologies. The World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (WSP) is envisaged as an instrument to attain the objectives of the World Solar Summit Process.

3. THE PROGRAMME AND ITS NATURE

The WSP finds its roots in the high-level regional consultations that were undertaken throughout the world during the last three years. The Programme is conceived as a necessary global commitment and a major co-ordinated effort of the various national and international actors to develop and implement 300-odd top-priority renewable energy projects of national, regional and international value within a 10-year period in order to demonstrate the technical feasibility, economic viability and social and political acceptability of solar energy. This Programme should be seen as a challenging joint effort involving governments, major international organizations and funding institutions, non-governmental organizations, industries, scientific and research institutions, universities, etc. to promote the development and deployment of renewable energy.

4. THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

The aims and objectives of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 are to :

- enhance the understanding of the role that renewable energy sources can play in the preservation of the environment, provision of energy services, particularly for rural and remote areas, creation of employment and improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the rural people, particularly of women in the developing countries of the world, and the fostering of increased energy independence;
- develop a favourable political, social and economic climate in favour of renewable energies by demonstrating the economic viability and social acceptability of such projects;
- promote and harmonize co-operation in education, training and research as well as in the transfer of research disclosures to industry at the regional, inter-regional and international levels;
- strengthen the commitment from the international community, especially multilateral and bilateral donors as well as the national commitment from each country; and
- reinforce local technological and entrepreneurial capacity-building and encourage the creation of small-scale financing and delivery mechanisms.

5. SCOPE OF THE PROGRAMME

The Programme includes projects of varying degrees of geographical limits and accruing values. There are projects which have been identified by various national governments themselves as being of the highest priority. Such projects, known as the High-priority National Projects, will not only be of benefit to the concerned countries but will also provide valuable information to other countries.

Other projects of regional value have been identified during the various regional consultations that took place in different parts of the world during the last three years. These projects have been termed High-priority Regional Projects, the benefits of which will accrue to the entire region.

Finally, there are global projects of universal value, identified and endorsed during the regional ministerial-level and high-level expert meetings, as well as during the meetings of the Regional Solar Councils, organized since 1993 within the framework of the World Solar Summit Process. A short summary of each of these projects is presented hereunder:

- *Rural Electrification* In the rural and/or remote areas of the world, more than 400 million households do not have access to electricity.
- *Global Education and Training Programme* Its objective is to effectively disseminate the information and provide appropriate training for engineers, technicians and users of solar energy technology as well as decision makers, businessmen and industrialists.
- *Water Desalination and Purification* The objective of this project is to initiate the implementation of a world water desalination programme designed to establish new ways of supplying drinkable water to rural areas, using renewable energies.
- *Information and Communication* The objectives are: to provide the necessary information, both to the decision-maker and to the public at large, in order to sensitize them on the potential of renewable energies; and to provide professional know-how and expertise sharing with regard to renewable energy technologies and systems.
- *Industrial Policy, Market Penetration and Technology Transfer* The aims are: to set regulations for the integration of renewable energies in common planning procedures and project development; to establish new information channels to disseminate the appropriate technologies to target groups of professionals and marketers; to set up mechanisms to facilitate North-South and South-South technology-sharing initiatives at the regional and local levels; and to support the market with strong research and development efforts to investigate innovative concepts and stimulate the take-up of new technologies in the market based on the feedback from the market's end users.

6. STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE THE PROGRAMME'S OBJECTIVES

The WSP envisages the accomplishment of its objectives by mobilizing a concerted global effort with the continued co-operation and commitment of various governments, international organizations, bilateral and multilateral funding institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, research organizations and universities etc. As the programme aims at implementing the high-priority projects of national and regional importance submitted by various governments, it attaches a strategic importance to continued inter- and intra-governmental support and to the mobilization of the private sector.

7. FUNDING FOR THE PROGRAMME

Various regional consultations on this issue have revealed that in some countries today, budgetary provision already exists in the areas of research, education, training and development on renewable energies. However, it has become increasingly evident that for the development of renewable energies, the funding windows from government and private sources as well as financial and developmental institutions should be augmented. Furthermore, innovative new financing opportunities, including microfinancing and the need to attract private capital to supplement the insufficient public resources, should be created. It is expected that national governments, as well as international and regional development and finance banks, will accord high priority to finance renewable energy projects identified in the WSP.

8. METHODOLOGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The detailed methodology for the implementation of the Programme will be finalized after the latter is formally launched at the World Solar Summit. Under the overall guidance of the World Solar Commission, the programme will be given a definite structure within a period of nine months after the Summit through intensive deliberations and appropriate negotiations, it being understood that the Programme is open-ended, i.e. that new projects can be included during the decade that it will cover.

The World Solar Programme 1996-2005 will be implemented having recourse as much as possible to partnership arrangements and using existing structures extensively. At the international level, the various organizations and institutions should be responsible for the execution of projects within their respective spheres of competence. The same will be true at the regional level, where the regional solar councils created at the regional preparatory meetings for the World Solar Summit Process should play a co-ordinating and monitoring role.

While UNESCO is prepared to continue to furnish the Secretariat of the World Solar Commission, a substantial increase in the participation of all main actors at the international intergovernmental level will be necessary to ensure the successful completion and implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005.

WORLD SOLAR SUMMIT

HARARE DECLARATION
ON SOLAR ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We, the Heads of State and Government, gathered or officially represented in Harare on the occasion of the World Solar Summit, following the invitation by the Government of Zimbabwe and at the initiative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in collaboration with international organizations and institutions, in order to launch a programme for global solar activities to be known as the World Solar Programme 1996-2005,

1. recognize the significance of the role that solar and other sources of renewable energy such as wind, geothermal, hydro, biomass and ocean, as well as energy efficiency, should play in the provision of energy services and in the sustainable use of environmental resources for the well-being of humanity ;

2. reiterate our support for the principles and actions for the promotion of energy systems for sustainable development recommended by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held on 3-14 June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in particular the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, as well as the commitments made in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ;

3. recognize that the provision of sufficient energy services at affordable prices and the adoption of energy conservation measures are essential for the progress of all countries, developed and developing alike, to meet current and expanding needs in ways which minimize environmental degradation and risks, as well as to realize the full potential of renewable energy sources ;

4. recognize that there is a need to increase substantially access to energy in developing countries, and that the provision of adequate energy services can improve living conditions, alleviate poverty, improve health and education, promote small-scale enterprises and create other income-generating activities especially in rural and isolated areas, thereby reducing rural to urban migration ;

5. recognize that the role of solar energy in each country needs to be integrated and specified in its national energy policy ;

6. recognize that the development, deployment and widespread utilization of solar energy face difficulties, particularly with regard to their management, maintenance and financing as well as to the availability and accessibility of relevant data, information, education, training and technology ;

7. recognize that increased use of solar energy can reduce environmental degradation caused by adverse human activities such as industrial pollution and deforestation, and that it is the responsibility of governments and all sectors of civil society to work together to find lasting solutions to problems threatening the sustainable development of humanity ;

8. emphasize that the management of atmospheric emissions of greenhouse and other gases and substances will increasingly require efficient and environmentally sound energy systems, including solar energy ones ;

9. recognize the important role that relevant non-governmental organizations play in the development and deployment of solar energy ;

10. recognize that women have an important role to play in the promotion of solar energy, and that they would benefit significantly from its use ;

11. are convinced that sustainable development and utilization of solar energy would be enhanced by local and national capacity building, policy reform and technology sharing among nations, with emphasis on coherent efforts towards technology acquisition and development in the developing countries.

We therefore,

12. commit ourselves to work towards :he wider use of solar energy to enhance the economic and social development of all people; support and promotion of these efforts should be very important goals of our governments, the international community and all sectors of society, especially with respect to people living in isolated and underdeveloped rural and island communities ;

13. commit ourselves to work towards policies and effective mechanisms that will speed up and facilitate the use of solar energy avoiding duplication and administrative delays, and the encouragement of international co-operation, including participation in regional and international bodies, scientific and technical organizations ;

14. commit ourselves to work towards the greater use of solar energy through the provision of adequate technical assistance and funding, the full utilization of existing international funds, and the facilitation of increased participation by both public and private sectors.

In pursuit of these objectives we:

15. call on all nations to join in the development and implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 ;

16. invite the World Solar Commission to continue to provide high-level leadership and guidance to achieve the objectives of the Summit, and UNESCO to continue to play a leading role in the development of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005, in close co-operation with relevant international organizations ;

17. invite the Secretary-General and Heads of Specialized Agencies and Programmes of the United Nations, as well as national governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions and the private sector, to join in the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005.

HARARE, 17 September 1996

UNITED
NATIONS

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12 June 1997

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Nineteenth special session
Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF AGENDA 21

Note by the Secretary-General

1. Pursuant to the various provisions of General Assembly resolutions 50/113 of 20 December 1995 and 51/181 of 16 December 1996, the following documents, which have been issued for the consideration of the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory body for the special session of the Assembly devoted to an overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21, are hereby transmitted to the Assembly at its nineteenth special session:

(a) E/CN.17/1997/2 and Add.1-31: report of the Secretary-General on overall progress achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

(b) E/CN.17/1997/3 and Corr.1: report of the Secretary-General on global change and sustainable development: critical trends;

(c) E/CN.17/1997/4: report of the Secretary-General on an assessment of activities that pose a major threat to the environment;

(d) E/CN.17/1997/5: report of the Secretary-General on an assessment of progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national level;

(e) E/CN.17/1997/6: report of the Secretary-General on proposals for the streamlining of requests for national reporting;

(f) E/CN.17/1997/7 and Corr.1: report of the Secretary-General on an inventory of ongoing energy-related programmes and activities of entities within the United Nations system, on coordination of such activities and on arrangements needed to foster the linkage between energy and sustainable development within the system;

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* A/S-19/1.

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(g) E/CN.17/1997/8: report of the Secretary-General on the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development: application and implementation;

(h) E/CN.17/1997/9: report of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive assessment of the freshwater resources of the world;

(i) E/CN.17/1997/11: note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the implementation of that Convention;

(j) E/CN.17/1997/14: report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;

(k) E/CN.17/1997/15: note verbale dated 11 February 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General;

(l) E/CN.17/1997/16: letter dated 29 January 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General;

(m) E/CN.17/1997/18: note verbale dated 18 February 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General;

(n) E/CN.17/1997/19: letter dated 18 February 1997 from the Permanent Representatives of Brazil and Norway to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General;

(o) E/CN.17/1997/21: note by the Secretary-General transmitting the contribution of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

(p) E/CN.17/1997/23: letter dated 1 April 1997 from the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women to the Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

(q) E/CN.17/1997/24: letter dated 21 April 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus addressed to the Secretary-General.

2. Those documents will be before the General Assembly for its consideration at the nineteenth special session.

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23 June 1997

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Nineteenth special session

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Letter dated 23 June 1997 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly

At present, 16 Member States are in arrears under the terms of Article 19 of the Charter, which states as follows:

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member."

The minimum payments necessary to reduce the amounts owed by those Member States on their contributions so that they remain below the gross amount owed for the preceding two full years (1995-1996) are the following:

	United States dollars
Bosnia and Herzegovina	691 388.00
Central African Republic	360 855.00
Chad	128 255.00
Congo	154 811.00
Dominica	128 255.00
Equatorial Guinea	62 055.00
Gambia	128 255.00
Grenada	127 855.00
Iraq	4 697 951.00

	United States dollars
Kyrgyzstan	975 202.00
Republic of Moldova	1 779 599.00
Sao Tome and Principe	128 255.00
Seychelles	888.40
Somalia	529 655.00
Togo	26 655.00
Yugoslavia	10 877 496.00

(Signed) Kofi ANNAN
Secretary-General

UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly

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25 June 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Nineteenth special session

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Letter dated 25 June 1997 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly

Further to my letter dated 23 June 1997 (A/S-19/20), I have the honour to inform you that Seychelles has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

(Signed) Kofi ANNAN
Secretary-General

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Nineteenth special session
Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Letter dated 16 June 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Seoul Declaration on Environmental Ethics,** which was adopted at World Environment Day, held at Seoul on 5 June 1997 and hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea and the United Nations Environment Programme.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and the Declaration circulated as a document of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, under item 8 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) PARK Soo Gil
Permanent Representative

* A/S-19/1.

** Circulated in the language of submission only.

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ANNEX

World Environment Day 1997

Seoul Declaration on Environmental Ethics

~ People's Pledge ~

Preamble

As humanity moves toward the 21st century, we are left with no choice but to reconsider the values and principles that underlie our relationship with the Earth. Over the course of history, we see that lifestyles and ways of thinking have changed dramatically, having made tremendous progress in science and technology, economic growth, and material wealth. These changes have enhanced the quality of life for some, but have diminished it for others. We also have witnessed the continuation of unsustainable development practices and lifestyles which have detrimentally affected the natural environment and indeed our very lives.

Clearly, a fundamental change is required. The global community is in need of a set of guidelines that would allow equitable access to the environmental benefits of the planet, without exceeding its carrying capacity. We must come to an understanding that the current global environmental crisis is a result of value systems, driven by human greed and excessive materialism, and the mistaken complacency that science and technology would solve all our problems. Unless we reexamine our values and beliefs, such conditions will further environmental degradation, and ultimately lead to the collapse of natural systems that support life. Reevaluating what constitutes sustainable development and the proactive role humankind must play to realize it is the only sensible course of action.

We believe that in order to enhance the quality of life, and to avoid wholesale ecological destruction, a deeper understanding of life and the formulation of a new system of environmental ethics are required.

The key is to recognize that humans and the natural environment are interdependent and part of a larger entity, the "Whole-Life-System." We must therefore understand that the environment is not a resource for exploitation, but is a partner for life. Human society must also begin to better understand itself as a collective and cohesive body whose very welfare is dependent on the welfare of all its constituents -- the cultural, ethnic, national, and generational groups. Such an ecological perspective on nature and on ourselves constitutes the best hope of solving environmental crises.

The critical decisions that we make must be determined by our own sense of moral strength, nobility of spirit, and a reverence for life. To this end, we require an ethical paradigm based on social equity, respect for diversity, and a culture of cooperation and shared responsibility in preserving the integrity of the Whole-Life-System.

In recognition of these considerations, on this date of June 5, 1997, marking the 25th anniversary of the Stockholm Declaration and the 5th anniversary of the Rio Declaration, we gather here in Seoul, Korea to declare this "Seoul Declaration on Environmental Ethics" in order to establish an evolving framework of ideals, principles, and guidelines to sustain life on Earth.

Principles

Earth's Whole-Life-System refers to a totality in which human beings, together with other life forms, natural elements and forces, co-exist interdependently as a cohesive entity. The viability of the Whole-Life-System is essential to and dependent upon the very existence and integrity of all of its constituent components, and no species has an exclusive right to Earth's environment. All human decisions ought to be made and implemented on the premise that the existence of all life, including human life, can be sustained only when the integrity and well-being of the Whole-Life-System is preserved.

1. Creating a Spiritual Culture

The industrial civilization has brought about an abundance of goods and services for humankind, but also an obsession for materialism and a distortion of human values. These adverse effects on society have reached a critical threshold. We must act now to find the proper balance between materialistic pursuits and the need for spiritual fulfillment, in order to embrace life more fully.

For thousands of years, many indigenous groups worldwide have been practicing the ethics of living in harmony with their natural environment. It is necessary that we reevaluate the significance of their cultures and traditions and incorporate their knowledge and expertise into our own.

2. Achieving Environmental Equity

Planet Earth is the common home for all of us. We must all strive to share equitably the benefits and burdens resulting from the use of the environment. In particular, equity should exist among nations, ethnic groups, and generations of humankind in the distribution of the social and economic benefits from the Earth's environment.

A perspective on environmental ethics enables us to recognize that all people have the same rights to a secure environment as well as the right to pursue individual happiness and prosperity. Respecting such rights is crucial since the welfare and quality of life of every individual contribute to the survival and well-being of the Whole-Life-System. Furthermore, because in many cases environmental degradation is long-term and cumulative, precautionary policies guided by considerations of equity must be implemented to safeguard the rights of future generations.

3. Greening Science and Technology

Science and technology have played a critical role in human history and will be one of the key determining factors in shaping a sustainable future. However, the impacts of technological development and their applications have also become so significant that they could threaten the stability of the ecosystem and human society. Therefore, a rethinking of the expectations and responsibilities of the scientific community is required.

The principles that should guide the development and use of technology must take into account the finite carrying capacity of nature and the intricate interconnectedness of the Whole-Life-System. The development of environmentally-friendly technologies and the

accumulation of environmental information must be encouraged. In addition, technologies should be subject to rigorous assessment before and after their application to avoid irreparable damage to the environment. The results of such efforts should be exchanged worldwide in order to facilitate joint efforts aimed toward ensuring a more sustainable future.

4. Sharing Responsibilities

All members of human society are responsible for maintaining the integrity of the global environment as a Whole-Life-System. We must accept our accountability and fulfill our responsibilities to protect the integrity of the global environment with determination in our everyday lives. These individual efforts can be enhanced through building networks within and among groups of civil society and government, industry and business, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). With such cooperation and coordinated participation, appropriate policies can be developed and implemented effectively.

Guidelines for Action

Governments

1. ***Policy Coordination.*** Sectoral, economic and other policies must contribute to preserving the sustainability of the Whole-Life-System. To that end, governments at all levels must ensure that their policies are the result of well coordinated strategies among all relevant government agencies.

2. ***Precautionary Approach.*** Development projects must be subject to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs). Any project that is expected to have significant adverse environmental effects must be accompanied by appropriate precautionary mitigation measures and/or action plans to counter all such impacts. As declared in Rio, where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

3. ***Accessibility.*** Policies and programs concerning development and environmental preservation must reflect the interests and informed judgement of all stakeholders. To achieve full participation, information pertaining to these policies must not only be made available to the public, but done so in an accommodating manner to allow sufficient time for public comment to be introduced and incorporated into such policies.

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4. ***Support for Environmentally-Sound Technology.*** Governments must support the development of environmentally-sound technologies for all sectors of the economy and encourage their application. To this end, all governments must endeavor to make the necessary financial commitments to subsidize research, development, and use of the technologies where appropriate. Governments should create enabling conditions and incentives for the development and application of such technologies, as well as for the exchange of the scientific and technical information which result from such development.

5. ***Equity.*** Benefits and burdens from development and environmental policies must be distributed fairly among members of society in order to promote social and economic equity. In particular, such policies must help ensure that women, children, elderly, the poor and disadvantaged, indigenous groups, and the physically challenged, are empowered to share in the benefits resulting from environmental and development policies. Governments must also promote suitable conditions for active participation in the decision-making process by all stakeholders.

6. ***Environmental Education.*** Education, especially from an early age, has a significant effect on how people form attitudes toward the environment, and is thus crucial. Educational programs designed to enhance awareness of environmental issues and ethics must be developed and applied at all levels of society through all available practical means.

Governments should make special efforts to financially support such educational programs.

7. ***International Cooperation.*** Nations share common responsibilities for preserving Earth's environment. This requires active involvement in regional and international cooperative efforts and collaborative implementation of environmentally-sound policies, while complying with established multilateral agreements. Moreover, in order to further international cooperation, newly developed scientific information as well as experience in environmental and development policy-making should be exchanged worldwide to facilitate efforts for global environmental protection and improvement and to provide early warning of impending problems.

Citizens

8. ***Environmentally-Sound Lifestyles.*** All members of society must cultivate lifestyles that avoid waste and excess. Bearing in mind that Earth's resources are limited, each person must avoid a culture of extravagant material consumption and pursue ways to preserve the planet by means of environmentally-sound consumption patterns. Each individual can make a difference in his or her consumption patterns, and when accumulated collectively, the positive effect can be tremendous.

9. ***Active Involvement.*** Individuals are encouraged to participate both morally and politically in all levels in the decision-making processes which affect the environment in order to improve the

quality of decision-making, avoid corruption, and ensure that their interests are properly represented. Broad-based participation will accordingly guide government policies to be equitable and well-balanced in both direction and purpose.

10. ***Caring and Compassion.*** Every person is encouraged to assist those who are environmentally, economically, and socially disadvantaged and extend the boundary of community to include all living beings.

Religious and Faith Communities

11. ***Spiritual View.*** The scale and magnitude of environmental problems are such that they must be recognized as having a religious as well as scientific dimension. Efforts to safeguard the environment need to be infused with a vision of the sacred. Religious and spiritual leaders must accept a responsibility to make known the full dimensions of this challenge. The cause of environmental integrity and justice must occupy a position of utmost priority for people of faith.

NGOs

12. ***Public Awareness.*** An important role of NGOs is to heightén public awareness by organizing and maintaining environmental instruction and guidance. NGOs must amplify their efforts to educate and train individuals, organizations, and public officials so that the message of conserving the Whole-Life-System can be spread through

multiple channels. In addition, NGOs must take initiatives by way of projects and clean-up activities to protect and improve the environment.

13. ***Role of "Watchdog" and Liaison.*** NGOs must serve the role of "watchdog", be prepared to assess and evaluate policies, programs, and projects, and where appropriate, propose alternatives. Furthermore, in order to serve the role of liaison between and among governments, industrial sectors, and civil society, NGOs must promote active dialogue between the stakeholders.

14. ***Specialization and Coordination.*** Given the increasing complexities of the environmental issues, NGOs could benefit from further specialization within their field of expertise. They are also encouraged to build coalitions with NGOs from other disciplines to enhance their effectiveness. Forming cooperative networks will further promote the exchange of information, knowledge, and expertise.

15. ***Regional Environmental Activism.*** The increasingly effective role of regional environmental activism initiated by local citizens and communities is critical to the protection of the environment and ecosystems. With this in mind, regional NGOs should make an effort to form coordinated and interactive alliances with citizens and communities.

Industry and Business Sectors

16. ***Environmentally-Friendly Business Practices.*** The industrial sector must actively apply eco-efficiency principles in order to

use less energy and materials for the same amount of output and to reduce emissions and waste. This invites, inter alia, widespread adoption of environmentally-friendly production technologies, efficient use of materials and energy, an increased use of recycled materials and renewable energy, minimization of harmful emissions, and the productive use of wastes. The financial and insurance sectors must also increasingly foster environmentally-sound investment.

17. ***Extended Responsibilities.*** In developing and manufacturing their products, all industrial sectors must recognize that their responsibilities do not stop at the end of the production line, but extend to all phases of a product's lifecycle, including its disposal.

18. ***Environmental Management System.*** Industries must examine the undue pressures they may be exerting on the environment by means of regularly timed audits of their business practices. Accordingly, industries must make a determined effort to minimize such pressures on the environment by preventing and abating pollution. Industries must take measures to incorporate the costs of pollution-prevention and mitigation technologies as part of their normal production activities.

International Organizations

19. ***Monitoring.*** International organizations must monitor the global ecosystem and major changes therein on a regular basis including, but not limited to, global climate change, ozone depletion, and the extinction of species. Transboundary movements of hazardous wastes

and transboundary conflicts over freshwater rights and use should likewise be monitored.

20. ***Developing Policy Alternatives.*** International organizations must address global and transboundary environmental problems by analyzing and developing policy alternatives, as well as by facilitating cooperation and agreement among nations, to resolve such problems.

21. ***Conflict Resolution.*** International organizations should facilitate the prevention and resolution of environmental disputes and promote cooperative environmental policies. Furthermore, international organizations must promote recognition of differing national environmental standards, policies, and institutions among nations in order to reduce international disputes and to promote international cooperation in trade and investment.

22. ***Strengthening Ties.*** International organizations must play a key role in strengthening international and regional cooperation, as well as in fostering information exchange through which the benefits of experience and technological expertise of developed countries can be shared with developing countries.

23. ***Cooperative Development.*** International organizations must work together with developed countries in providing both financial and technical assistance to developing countries, and in particular, to the least developed countries, to assist in breaking the cycle of poverty and environmental deterioration.

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Academic and Research Institutions

24. ***Research and Development.*** Academic and research institutions must fulfill their role of advancing scientific knowledge of the environment and developing mitigative, pollution-preventive, and less resource-consumptive technologies. In so doing, scientists and engineers must exercise high moral discipline and maximum precaution in their research, bearing in mind the potentially adverse effects their research may exert on the environment.

25. ***Interdisciplinary Approach.*** Science and technology alone cannot resolve the impending environmental crisis. An interdisciplinary approach, which includes other branches of academic endeavors such as the humanities and social sciences, is needed to develop programs for a better understanding of the increasingly complex environmental problems.

Communications and Mass Media

26. ***Publicizing Environmental Issues.*** The media must fulfill their responsibility to convey and report with accuracy the state of the environment and related environmental policies. With their ability to heighten public awareness of such issues, mass media and the entertainment industry should make additional efforts to publicize environmental success stories and issues of interest which may inspire others to action.

27. ***Utilizing Electronic Media.*** The new electronic media open a new dimension of unprecedented interactive and fast-paced exchange of information. Therefore, efforts should be made to utilize these new forms of media to facilitate communication of environmental information and active participation of people throughout the world, in pursuit of preserving the Whole-Life-System.

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OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Letter dated 23 June 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of Paraguay to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Republic of Paraguay, which is the coordinator pro tempore of the Rio Group, I have the honour to request you to have the text of the Declaration of the Rio Group distributed as a United Nations document as part of the documentation to be considered during the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ramón DÍAZ-PEREIRA
Minister
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/S-19/1.

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ANNEX

Declaration of the Rio Group

We, the member countries of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Policy Coordination - Rio Group - state our intention to continue to make progress towards sustainable development by carrying out the decisions and commitments laid down in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. To this end, we shall step up our efforts to continue to promote economic and social development as well as environmental protection.

Five years after the Earth Summit, we note some progress towards achieving its objectives, particularly with regard to institution-building, the codification of environmental law, public participation, and the process aimed at reversing the trends in environmental problems. Nevertheless, the general outlook for economic and social development is no better than in 1992. The environment continues to deteriorate and major environmental problems are still deeply rooted in economic structures.

Therefore, aware of the needs to avoid greater environmental degradation and, consequently, a deterioration of human health, we reaffirm our determination to change certain production and consumption patterns in order to help bring about a better life for all.

We believe that international cooperation and dialogue should be guided by principle 7 of Agenda 21, which says that States have common but differentiated responsibilities.

We therefore urge the developed countries, cooperation agencies and international financial institutions to strengthen their support for the developing countries in accordance with the commitments entered into at the Earth Summit, especially with regard to the transfer of technology and financial resources. To that end, we urge compliance with the provisions of chapter 33 of Agenda 21 concerning official development assistance and the implementation of innovative financing mechanisms.

We also believe that the work of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development should be oriented towards the promotion of Agenda 21 as a whole and that, accordingly, attention to emerging sustainable development issues should not be to the detriment of attention to unresolved socio-economic and environmental problems.

The United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP), for its part, should continue to provide environmental inputs for decision-making in the area of sustainable development; its strengthening and provision with adequate, predictable budgetary resources are therefore imperative.

We renew our countries' commitment to promoting joint action for the effective implementation of the agreements and Plan of Action of the Summit of

the Americas on Sustainable Development, adopted at Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in December 1996.

These agreements constitute a starting point for a hemisphere-wide position on sustainable development - the cornerstone of a cooperative alliance among the States of the Americas in their common search for a better quality of life for their peoples, based on integrated, mutually reinforcing economic, social and environmental objectives.

We also value the efforts made at the regional, subregional and national levels through the adoption of policies and strategies intended to achieve sustainable development.

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24 June 1997

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Nineteenth special session
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OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Letter dated 23 June 1997 from the Permanent Representatives of Brazil, Germany, Singapore and South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We, the undersigned Permanent Representatives of Brazil, South Africa, Germany and Singapore to the United Nations, have the honour to convey to you the text of the joint initiative launched by our respective Heads of State and Government in New York on 23 June 1997 (see annex).

We would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 8.

(Signed) Celso Luiz Nunes AMORIM
Permanent Representative of Brazil

(Signed) Kiphusizi J. JELE
Permanent Representative of South Africa

(Signed) Tono EITEL
Permanent Representative of Germany

(Signed) Bilahari KAUSKAN
Permanent Representative of Singapore

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ANNEX

Declaration
by
Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Germany
President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Brazil
Deputy President Thabo M. Mbeki, South Africa
Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, Singapore

on the occasion of the Special Session
of the United Nations General Assembly
on 23 June 1997 in New York

Global Initiative On Sustainable Development
To Keep Alive the Spirit of Rio and to Create the Conditions for a Viable Future for a Growing World Population

Introduction

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of Brazil, Germany, Singapore and South Africa, have decided to launch this joint initiative as a contribution to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Five years have passed since the historic Earth Summit. Although significant progress has been made since Rio, much remains to be done. Poverty and environment degradation continue to affect the lives of millions of people in many parts of the world. Global warming, the loss of biological diversity, the spread of deserts, deforestation, the crisis in many of our cities remind us every day of the challenges which confront us. The unsustainable patterns of consumption and production continue to be the major cause of environment degradation worldwide. This is therefore not an occasion for complacency or mindless celebration. It is, however, also not an occasion for hand-wringing. We should use the occasion to recall the spirit of Rio, renew our commitments, and to redouble our efforts to conserve nature and to achieve sustainable development.

All countries must cooperate to protect the Earth's ecosystem and promote an international economic environment which is conducive to the implementation of Agenda 21. States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The industrialised countries, by virtue of their economic, technological and political resources bear a special responsibility to help solving global problems.

Meeting these challenges requires the provision of adequate financial resources for the implementation of Agenda 21, both from domestic and international sources. This presupposes increased bilateral and multilateral cooperation including transfer of technology, and private investments. We must increase the efficiency of our endeavours.

A United Response

2. The United Nations as the one truly universal international organisation has a significant role to play as we strive to face the twin challenges of sustainable development and environmental protection. The United Nations Charter should be amended to include sustainable development and in this context environmental protection as two of the purposes of the United Nations.

In the short term the United Nations Environment Programme should be reformed and strengthened to become the world's environmental conscience.In the medium term the establishment of a global environmental umbrella organization of the UN with UNEP as a major pillar should be considered.

We support the proposal that the Commission on Sustainable Development should continue to function as the lead forum for the Rio process. The Secretary-General should also give due account to the importance of sustainable development in his efforts to reorganise the UN Secretariat.

Implementing the Rio Conventions and Global Action to Protect Forests

3. We underscore the need for the parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change to complete their negotiations on a protocol which is effective in reducing greenhouse gas emissions when they meet for their third conference in Kyoto in December 1997.

We expect the Special Session to send a clear message to that conference to adopt a protocol which will require in a legally binding manner the industrialized countries to reduce individually or jointly the emissions of certain greenhouse gases (Carbon Dioxide, Methane, Nitrous Oxide) together by 15 % by 2010 and 10 % by 2005 based on 1990 levels. The protocol should also include concrete policies and measures. We recognise that in the longer term a truly global effort by all countries is needed, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities, in order to move towards achieving the ultimate objective of the Convention.

4. We consider the wider ratification and full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity indispensible. We must advance the current work on implementation, including traditional knowledge and equitable sharing of benefits, complete the negotiations on the biosafety protocol and initiate the creation of a network of protected areas with a large degree of biological diversity. In preserving the diversity of species, both protection and sustainable use should be mutually complementary.

We pledge our full support for the Convention to Combat Desertification, which entered into force in December 1996.

5. With regard to the ongoing deforestation and forest degradation worldwide we further stress common concern for the future of the world's forests. A joint solution to this problem by the international community is urgently necessary in order to meet the social, economic, ecological and cultural needs of present and future generations. In order to prepare a decision the Special Session of the General Assembly will have to discuss the options presented by the IPF and the 5th Session of CSD for further international action, including the elaboration of a global convention on forests. We call for the implementations of national and international strategies for the preservation and sustainable use of all forests.

New Initiatives

6. **Decade for the Sustainable Production and Use of Energy**

We emphasise the need for a joint strategy for the efficient production and rational use of energy and for the widespread introduction of renewable sources of energy, including solar energy and biomass. We encourage the World Bank and other international financial institutions to expand their programmes in this field. To promote international awareness of this very important issue, we recommend that the decade 2000 to 2010 should be proclaimed the „Decade for the Sustainable Production and Use of Energy".

7. **Conference on Sustainable Urban Development**

We strongly believe that the international community must do all it can to ensure that our urban human settlements are sustainable so that we can safeguard the quality of life of our future generations. In the year 2000 more than three billion people - half of the world's population - will be living in

urban human settlements. We, therefore, commend the Federal Republic of Germany for offering to host a global conference in Berlin, in the year 2000, of the leaders of the world's 21 largest megacities, as well as representatives of some of the towns and cities considered exemplary within the meaning of Agenda 21. Our countries will also organise or support a series of regional symposiums to facilitate an exchange of information and promote the application of strategies and models for sustainable urban development. For urban populations in developing countries environmental degradation is often associated with poverty and lack of adequate access to safe drinking water, sewage and basic sanitation services. We support an international dialogue on freshwater to be conducted under the auspices of CSD.

8. **Environmentally Acceptable Transport**

We also note with great concern that traffic induced emissions all over the world are increasing drastically. Environmentally acceptable transport is indispensable to sustainable development. We recognize the need to phase out the use of leaded petrol as quickly as possible, to increase the availibility of alternative fuels from renewable resources, and to whenever possible reduce car exhaust emissions. The CSD should promote global guidelines for environmentally sound transport with a view inter alia to expand local public transport systems, and whenever possible to switch transport from the road to rail and waterway, and to avoid unnecessary traffic.

9. **Applying the Principle of Sustainable Development in All Areas**

We realize that the principle of sustainable development will also have to be applied in numerous other areas apart from those stressed in this document. They include the need to promote a mutually supportive relationship between trade and environment, as well as sustainable tourism. They also include international measures to protect marine environment, including sustainable fisheries, and global efforts to safeguard water resources in order to meet mankind's basic needs and secure the development of not only urban but rural regions.

Conclusion

10. We represent four countries on four continents. We are a microcosm of the world. The fact that we are able to forge a partnership to launch this joint initiative augurs well for the future. We urge all our partners at the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly to join us in the great enterprise of protecting the natural foundation of life and ensuring sustainable development. The future of our planet and humanity are at stake. We must not fail.